DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 315 PS 014 843

AUTHOR Eddy, James H.
TITLE Child Management for Parents and Caregivers.
INSTITUTION Mott Children's Health Center, Flint, MI.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 10p.
AVAILABLE FROM Mott Children's Health Center, 806 West Sixth Avenue, Flint, MI 48503 (no price quoted).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Caregivers; *Child Rearing; Children; *Discipline; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; *Parenting Skills; Toddlers

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this brochure is to help parents and caregivers guide children's behavior in a more effective and pleasant manner. Twenty principles of child management are listed and explained. Examples illustrate how each principle should be applied. These principles include general suggestions for creating family rules and guidance on how to enforce rules. Many suggestions for positive reinforcement are also given; these stress ways of improving parent-child communication and the child's self-concept. Additional suggestions are given for dealing with children under the age of 3. (CB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED252315

CHILD MANAGEMENT FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

PS 014843

A
Mott Children's Health Center
Publication

Prepared by the
Behavioral Services Department
James H. Eddy, C.S.W.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Cindy Li
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

© Mott Children's Health Center
Flint, Michigan

CHILD MANAGEMENT FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Most parents want their children to enjoy life and be happy, healthy, fun-loving family members. Few parents actually choose to yell or be grouchy and disgruntled caretakers of their children. Nevertheless, raising children is the most demanding and responsible job any adult has ever assumed. In recent years, the job of being a parent has become even more difficult and frustrating.

The purpose of this brochure is to help parents guide their child's behavior in a more effective and pleasant manner.

It is important to remember that, although children are born with different characteristics, attitudes and potential, they must still live as a social being in a family structure. For a family to function well, all family members are expected to follow certain rules. However, all rules must be reasonable and necessary.

NOTE: While the text is addressed to parents and their children the reader should read the content of this publication from whichever perspective is appropriate – parent, caregiver or both.

PRINCIPLE 1: DON'T EXPECT MORE FROM YOUR CHILD THAN YOU DO FROM YOURSELF.

If you want your child to pick up his toys, then you must pick up those things which belong to you.

If you don't want your child to call you or other people "dumb", then you should not call your child "dumb".

If you want your child to wait on himself, then you must wait on yourself.

The old saying, "Practice what you preach", is certainly true when raising children.

PRINCIPLE 2: BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR CHILD.

To be consistent, parents should have as few rules as possible in the home. Then you will have more time to pay attention to these few rules rather than trying to keep track of a lot of rules.

Think of how many rules you give to your child every day. **Don't have rules that you won't have time to enforce.**

To be consistent with your child is a very difficult thing to do. But, it is the most important thing you can do. The definition that we give for consistency is simply, if you say "no" to your child, then it must be "no". Often when you say "no", your child may start crying or teasing you. To stop the crying you change your mind and give him what he wants. If you do this enough times, then you teach your child that he can get what he wants if he behaves badly enough. To get yourself out this habit, ask yourself if each "no" is really necessary. If so, then it must be no.

PRINCIPLE 3: MAKE RULES THAT ARE REASONABLE.

A rule that is reasonable must be consistent with the age, maturity, and ability of the child. It is important to remember that children are not miniature adults, and they do not reason as we do.

It **is not** reasonable to expect a six-year-old to clean his bedroom as well as the parent might.

It **is** reasonable to expect a six-year-old child not to interrupt another person who **is** talking.

It **is not** reasonable to expect a three-year-old child to share every toy he has. It **is** reasonable to expect a three-year-old to go to bed at an appropriate time in the evening.

It **is not** reasonable to expect your child to agree with you all of the time. It **is** reasonable for you to expect respectful behavior from your child. But remember, respect is a two-way street. As parents, you must respect your children's natural needs, questions and not expect blind obedience.

PRINCIPLE 4: DON'T HAVE RULES THAT YOU CANNOT ENFORCE.

When you have rules for your children that can't be enforced, then you make your children feel more powerful than you are.

When you say to your child, "Go to bed and go to sleep", you cannot enforce "go to sleep". If you tell your child that he cannot smoke, to enforce that rule you would have to be with your child twenty-four hours a day. Often children will express their anger by breaking those rules that they know a parent cannot enforce. This in turn enables them to feel very powerful because they have disobeyed you and there is nothing you can do about it.

PRINCIPLE 5: STAY AWAY FROM POWER STRUGGLES WITH YOUR CHILD.

Whenever you make a demand of your child which he refuses to obey, a power struggle develops. You may say to your child, "Sit in that chair for fifteen minutes." If the child refuses to sit in the chair, then the parent has become involved in a power struggle. The parent has demanded something that must now be enforced; physically, if necessary. Before making such a demand, the parent must decide that he is ready to enforce the demand, emotionally and physically.

When a parent gets involved in a power struggle with his child, the parent often loses. Again, this makes the child feel more powerful. Each time you lose in a power struggle with your child, the less control you have over him and the more behavior problems will develop.

PRINCIPLE 6: IF POSSIBLE, TRY TO IGNORE "BAD" BEHAVIOR.

You should not ignore destructive behavior or behavior that shows disrespect. However, some bad behavior can be ignored. Teasing, whining, and temper tantrums are attention-getting behaviors which are best ignored. When you pay attention to this kind of behavior, the child is rewarded by getting your attention. He then learns to use this behavior to get hi own way. Ignoring these behaviors is very difficult sometimes, but it is often very effective.

PRINCIPLE 7: DON'T ACT AS IF THE CHILD DID SOMETHING ON PURPOSE WHEN, IN FACT, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

Children have accidents just like adults do. When you accuse your child of doing something on purpose which, in fact, was an accident, then he may become very angry at you. This may also make him feel very inferior. He ends up feeling that he can't do anything right. Bed wetting, breaking something, or even messing his pants, may be accidental.

PRINCIPLE 8: DON'T ASK A CHILD IF HE DID SOMETHING WRONG, WHEN, IN FACT, YOU KNOW THAT HE DID IT.

Often a child will say he didn't do something, even though you saw him do it. If you then ask the child if he did it, you may be setting him up to lie to you. Instead, state to the child

that you know what he did and then choose an appropriate discipline.

PRINCIPLE 9: DON'T TRY TO BE THE FAIR PARENT.

When something happens out of your sight and you ask your two children which of them did it, they will try to blame one another. You have no way of knowing the facts, so you cannot judge which child should be disciplined. Therefore, discipline both children. Yes, one child is unfairly disciplined. But unless one child admits he is at fault, you cannot be fair.

PRINCIPLE 10: BE CALM WHEN YOU ARE GOING TO DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILD.

Some parents scream and holler at their children as a form of discipline. This seldom works. Instead, be calm and state your punishment firmly. "You will stay in your bedroom for twenty minutes." "No, I will not come into your bedroom again tonight. If you continue to ask me, you will not watch television tomorrow night."

PRINCIPLE 11: CORRECT YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR WITHOUT CRITICIZING YOUR CHILD.

If you tell your child that he is doing something wrong, be patient and explain to him how he should accomplish the task correctly. Don't continue to make comments to your child like the following: "You never can do anything right." "You know better than that." "Aren't you ever going to learn anything?" These statements simply make a child feel inferior. Repeated often enough he may begin to believe he is a failure.

Make as many positive comments to your child as you can. Build him up; don't tear him down. During the early years, children believe everything their parents say. Therefore, what parents say to their children can effect their sense of their own worth.

PRINCIPLE 12: GIVE YOUR CHILD YOUR ATTENTION WHEN HE BEHAVES CORRECTLY.

Pay attention to your child's interests and activities and encourage them to talk with you about such things. Even short periods such as five minutes of undivided attention will go far in improving your relationship with a child if those intervals are frequent, such as once or twice a day. Some families make dinnertime a special time for sharing the events of the day. In general, parents who pay attention to their children's good behaviors have to deal with fewer misbehaviors. Parents often pay attention to their children when they misbehave. Therefore, children learn to misbehave to get the attention. If you want to change this behavior, you should pay more attention to your child when he is behaving correctly.

If you tell your child to quiet down and he does, then tell him how much you appreciate his not making noise. Don't be afraid of complimenting your child. You will not spoil him. More than likely, he will want to do more for you.

PRINCIPLE 13: GIVE YOUR CHILD CHOICES TO MAKE, AND THEN HOLD YOUR CHILD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHOICE HE MAKES.

You can say to your child, "You can go out to play, but not until your bedroom is cleaned up." The choice of "when" is up to him. He may not clean up his bedroom, but this technique saves you from nagging your child. If going out to play is important to the child, sooner or later he will choose to clean up his bedroom.

Sometimes a child will consistently misbehave. For example, a child might always be late for supper or doesn't seem to want to eat at suppertime. If this is considered to be a problem to the parents, then the parents can make a contract with the child. However, the contract must be stated very clearly; in fact, it may be best to write it down.

An example would be to say to the child, "If you are not home at six o'clock, I will assume you do not wish to eat supper. I do not believe that if you choose not to eat, that you should snack later in the evening. Do you agree?" If the child agrees, and if he is not home at six o'clock, you deprive him of food. More than likely he will say something to try to make you feel guilty. Pay no attention except to remind your child of the contract that he chose not to eat.

One clear way to spoil children is to let children make choices but not hold them responsible for the choices they make. Children should be allowed to make choices that are reasonable for their age and do not endanger their well-being.

PRINCIPLE 14: IDENTIFY WITH THE FEELINGS THAT YOUR CHILD IS EXPRESSING.

One of the major steps that parents can take to build and maintain a good relationship with their child is to identify with a child's feelings. You can always identify with the **feelings** your child is expressing, even when you can't accept some behaviors. A boy hitting his sister may have good reasons to be angry. You could say, "I can see why you are angry, but you should not hit your sister." All feelings are generally acceptable and can be identified with. Many behaviors accompanying such feelings are not acceptable.

An example of this is when a child falls and hurts himself. The parent will say to the child, "Now stop your crying, it doesn't hurt that much." Or, he might say to a three-year-old boy, "Now big boys don't cry over a silly thing like that." Here the parent is denying the actual pain felt by the child. The parent might better accept the child's feelings by saying, "I'll bet that really hurt, didn't it?"

Often a child becomes angry at the parent for some reason. Perhaps because of a rule you have, or because you have disappointed him. The parents will not let the child express his anger and the child feels that his parents don't understand or don't care. It is important to say to a child, "I know you must be very angry at me for having that rule, however, we must still have the rule." You don't change the rule because your child is angry about it, but you also don't deny how the child feels about it.

There are many times that parents can let their child know that they understand by just stating how the child probably feels. It is important also that the parents not make fun of how the child feels about something.

PRINCIPLE 15: BE HONEST WITH YOUR CHILD.

A child must be able to make sense out of his parents' statements to him. Honest statements always make the most sense to a child.

If the parents want to spend a few minutes alone to discuss something privately, tell the child that you want to be alone and that he can watch television for a while. Don't tell him that it must be time for bed when it is not so that you can be alone.

Questions regarding sex or death should be answered honestly and clearly. It is not necessary to have long discussions or ask curious questions as to why they are asking; just give simply honest answers to sincere questions.

PRINCIPLE 16: TEACH YOUR CHILD TO FUNCTION AS AN INDEPENDENT PERSON.

Don't do things for a child that you know the child can do for himself. Examples of things children can often do for themselves are: getting dressed, putting food on his own plate, preparing for the next school day, preparing for bed, tying shoelaces, putting on boots and getting a drink of water. Doing these things for the child creates an unnecessary dependency.

However, children will often try to express their independence by saying "no" or by refusing to take their parent's hand when crossing a street. Allowing the child this kind of independence may be dangerous.

Some children don't want to grow up and some parents won't let their children grow up. Problems between parents and child will certainly increase unless both child and parent work toward independence.

PRINCIPLE 17: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT MOTHER AND FATHER AGREE ON CHILD REARING TECHNIQUES.

When parents agree on how to raise their children, there will be more consistency for the child, and he will be less confused about how to behave.

If parents choose to disagree and relate to their child differently, then the chances are good that the child will learn to manipulate one parent against the other.

If parents disagree on how to raise their children, we would recommend that they talk to a professional person who is trained in such matters.

This might enable the parents to come to some agreement. If one party refuses, then we would recommend that the other party seek professional assistance. If neither of these suggestions is workable, then we would advise each parent to relate to the child in his own way.

PRINCIPLE 18: LOVE YOUR CHILDREN.

Love is an expression of behavior; it is much more than saying, "I love you". To express the love you have for your child, you will show patience, understanding, sympathy and firmness. You will take some time to talk with and listen to your children. As a parent, you will play with them, encourage them, support them, and discipline them. You will be reasonable with them and responsible for them.

As defined above, you will not spoil your children by loving them too much. Sometimes, parents will hold back their love because they are concerned that their child will be spoiled. This is not true.

PRINCIPLE 19: RULES FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE THREE.

Children under three years old can be very demanding and frustrating to parents. At this age children are curious, selfish, stubborn and simply want their own way. They don't want their parents to interfere with them or to control them in any way.

In addition to the eighteen princples stated above, children three years old and under need additional guidance and understanding.

Children below the age of three do not understand the value of an object; they only know that it is fun to play with.

This age child must be protected from hurting himself. Constant screaming and spanking will only upset him without accomplishing anything.

Controlling the younger child is best accomplished by distracting him. Get him away from things you don't want him to do and give him something you do want him to do.

Short periods of isolation (five minutes) or placing him in his bedroom will accomplish the parents' goal.

We are not against spanking, but this method should only be used in those instances that the child is placing himself in danger.

PRINCIPLE 20: READ THIS BOOKLET AGAIN.

In reading this booklet again, think of examples where these principles might have helped you in the past and how they will assist you in the future.

"Mott Children's Health Center is a private, nonprofit outpatient facility dedicated to multidisciplinary care for the whole child. The Center serves residents of Genesee County, Michigan, from birth to 18 years of age who have medical, dental, behavioral, or educational problems.

The Health Center operates primarily from funds of an endowment initiated by the C.S. Mott Foundation and family. Eligibility for service is determined after referral by public or private agencies, health or educational professionals.

The Behavioral Services Department at the Health Center provides counseling services for parents and their children to improve parent-child relationships and self-understanding. Services range from diagnosis to treatment; from programs offered at the Center to programs offered in the community. One of the largest child abuse counseling programs in Michigan is among the services of the Behavioral Department.

For further information about the Health Center or its medical dental, behavioral, or educational service areas, contact the Coordinator of Interprofessional Services, Mott Children's Health Center, 806 West Sixth Avenue, Flint, Michigan 48503, (313) 767-5750."

The Department of Social Services will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, handicap, or political beliefs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DSS Publication 331 (Rev. 11-82)
Previous edition may be used.